

THE COURIER

LINCOLN, NEBR., SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 1900.



ENTERED IN THE POSTOFFICE AT LINCOLN AS SECOND CLASS MATTER.

THE COURIER,
Official Organ of the Nebraska State
Federation of Women's Clubs.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

THE COURIER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO

Office 1132 N street, Up Stairs.

Telephone 384.

SARAH B. HARRIS.

Editor

Subscription Rates—In Advance.

Per annum.....	\$1 00
Six months.....	75
Three months.....	50
One month.....	20
Single copies.....	05

THE COURIER will not be responsible for voluntary communications unless accompanied by return postage. Communications, to receive attention, must be signed by the full name of the writer, not merely as a guarantee of good faith, but for publication if advisable.

OBSERVATIONS.

The Library Site.

At the intersection of Eleventh and J streets there are 120 square feet. The site offered by Mr. Thompson on Fourteenth and M street is only one hundred feet in width. That is not a sightly sight. The ground is low and there is no approach or vista that the handsome building might close. The Eleventh and J street site is the height of ground. The east windows of the noble Greek cross structure, fronting on four streets, which may be built there, will frame a view of the capitol building. The north windows give on the court of the State university. The west and south on the rolling plains of the valley that bounds the city on the west. With the capitol and university at the two ends of the parallelogram there would only be the fourth angle incomplete. A handsome building in that site, built on ground owned by the city, a site which no one can buy, which only the city owns and which can be duplicated in impressiveness only by the central building of the university group, would be an ornament to the city. Having four fronts, the building in the favorable quarter be open to the most favored spot of the wind. Separated from all other buildings by thirty feet of road the danger from fire is minimized.

Every city has its own claim to beauty, but perhaps Paris, all things

considered is the most beautiful. Its arrangement is a series of circles and courts; in the centre of the circles a monument or building closing the end of the courts, a noble art gallery or municipal building. Lincoln was laid out by a pioneer who had not reflected upon the eternal sameness and monotony of parallel streets. Our streets lead nowhere. A resident of Lincoln for the past twenty-five years in closing his eyes and seeking to recall the view east on O street or south on Eleventh street would fail. But place him in imagination on the corner of Eleventh and J and the most unobserving will see the west facade of the state house and the south facade of the university. Or looking south on Fifteenth street from O the state house crowns the gentle ascent. This last is the street from which the clever coachman, who was taking Mr. W. D. Howells a drive about the city, pointed out the capitol to him. Few enough are the noble or inspiring architectural monuments in this rather squalid and sordid city of ours. Outside the city where the green, gray, yellow, red, and purple prairies stretch in gently curved lines, broken by the thin fringe of timber along a stream or defining the boundary of a farm, the landscape is inspiring and those who have grown up on these mysterious reaches grow homesick when the comparatively commonplace Atlantic Ocean or Rocky mountains is the only view within sight. But this Fifteenth street view of the capitol on a moonlight night, when the world is clothed in mystery is very beautiful indeed. Even on a dark night the tiara of electricity shining on the burnished, silver dome and glancing off from the roof into the velvet blackness of the trees, is bewitching. What the city needs is grouping. A library built at Eleventh and J, would give character to, would frame the view from O street. The city lacks distinction. To ignore the site proposed and accept one which is no nearer and would not beautify the city is certainly a great mistake.

Mr. Saulsbury has offered a plan which does not comprehend an excavation. He proposes to lay the foundation on the brick pavement already laid, which will, in that case, become the floor of the basement and furnace room. Steps lead up to the first floor and the corners between the wings or arms of the cross may be terraced with grass above the curb stone which encircles the building.

It is beyond the power of anybody to donate so suitable, so commanding, so convenient a site. The street car line is within a block. The court house is a block away, the state house four.

Not even Mr. Carnegie himself could buy this priceless site from the city. It belongs to the city and only the city can build on it. The street fair showed the city that it had real estate that properly used would

enhance the city's fame, unite the citizens in a combination effort for Lincoln which, more than anything else has served to remind us of our common interest in the city, our common ownership of the streets and the real communism of everybody's annual income of money, culture and social enjoyment.

It is extravagant to accept five or six thousand dollars for a site when we have a site of our own that money cannot buy. Mr. Thompson is willing and anxious to give something to the city. A library building without books is like a body without a soul. If Mr. Thompson would donate ten thousand dollars for books to the library after it is erected everyone who uses the library would be sure to remember to be grateful to the magnanimous donor. Whereas if he furnished a site that we do not need, the supererogatory would incite no gratitude and might even irritate some of us.

English in the Schools.

An essay or letter returned to a pupil with a general notation of bad grammar is not of special advantage to him when, the supposition is, he wrote it in the first place as well as he knew how. In the number of subjects which it is stylish to suppose the grade scholar must be taught his teachers have no time to correct his English. His English, that when he leaves school and applies for any sort of a job above shoveling dirt will be the qualification most sharply scrutinized. Employers do not ask questions in geology, botany, astronomy and "nature work." If they ever knew anything about them, most business men have forgotten it all.

If the taxpayers of Lincoln could read the letters and essays these students of everything but English write, they would agree with Mr. Bushnell who objects to putting in the high school a chemical laboratory such as they have at the university. The function of the public schools, is to teach the children "to ground them solidly," as the old fashioned teachers said, in reading, writing, arithmetic and grammar. An overwhelming proportion never reach the high school. Therefore the money contributed in taxes by the overwhelming proportion's fathers and mothers should be spent on the lower grades and not given in large chunks to the high school. These boys and girls are taken out for themselves because they need to work for themselves or their families. How unfair to continue to divert the taxes the bulk of which is contributed by the lower middle class to the support of a high school which the sons and daughters of the lower middle class, (basis of classification is property,) cannot attend. This view of the public school is not usually popular with school boards, which look forward to the graduation of a handsome class of

fifty or a hundred as the most satisfactory climax to a year's deliberation and debates.

In considering the public school scholar's ignorance of English, its uses and economy it is most difficult to say why in eight years of instruction Lincoln children fail to learn to speak and write the English language correctly. If it were only an occasional child that failed in spelling and grammar when called upon for a practical demonstration of his education, it would not be a matter for dismay, because there are dull children whom no method will polish. But it is the rule for the modern product of the Lincoln schools to spell incorrectly and compose turgidly. Some critics attribute the result to the meagre salaries paid the teachers. It has seemed for a long time that the trouble was in the multitude of subjects taught. The hours of the day and week are divided into so many subdivisions that the time spent on English is comparatively trifling and its subordination to arithmetic is made so apparent that the little student is impressed at a very early age with the small necessity of paying any particular attention to the study of grammar and spelling. The children who are very fond of reading, unconsciously plagiarize for themselves in time, if not a style at least a mode of writing not vulgar and at least correct and harmonious, a mode made up of an arrangement of some one else, with strains of Kipling, Scott and the curious composite key of the magazines mingled in tantalizing mixture. A child who has been properly taught the counterpoint of language can make his own chords and create his own effects.

It is humiliating to local pride, but the Omaha schools are immeasurably superior in the instruction of English, that is, judging, as an outsider only can, by the product of the two systems of schools. Little children in the Omaha schools write legibly, spell correctly and compose with simplicity and clearness. Omaha children are of the same mixed nationality as Lincoln children. The teachers are paid higher salaries and probably more attention is devoted to the despised subject of English.

Nathan S. Harwood.

If all the story were told, and the whole story would include a report from every business man who did business with the First National Bank during the years of the panic, Mr. Harwood's defense of the city and the southern half of the state from bankruptcy would be better understood. If the First National Bank had fallen all the other banks would have closed their doors both in this city and in the whole district of the South Platte, and no large business house either in this city or this district would have been able to sustain the shock. In those summer